DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 388 189 HE 028 732

AUTHOR Lee, John

TITLE Tenure.

INSTITUTION National Education Association, Washington, DC. Office of Higher Education.
PUB DATE Sep 95
NOTE 8p.
AVAILABLE FROM NEA, Office of Higher Education, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT NEA Higher Education Research Center Update; v1 n3 Sep 1995

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; Educational Trends; Employment Patterns; Faculty Workload; Higher Education; Intellectual Disciplines; School Demography; School Policy; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Salaries; *Tenure; *Tenured Faculty; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS Diversity (Faculty); *National Study of Postsecondary Faculty 1993

ABSTRACT

This report provides a national overview of patterns of tenure in higher education based on data from the 1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:93). This study included information on nearly 900,000 faculty members of whom 595,340 were full-time. All faculty appointments were included regardless of whether faculty members actually met classes or not. The study looked at characteristics of tenured faculty, differences in granting tenure by types of institutions, tenure by academic area, characteristics of full-time faculty members, salary of tenured faculty, and tenured faculty workload. Overall, the analysis reports that only slightly more than one-third of all college and university faculty members have tenure (35.9 percent), and just over half of full-time faculty members have tenure (52.8 percent). In addition, faculty members with tenure publish more and have more contact with students than those without tenure. Differences exist between public and private colleges in the share of the full-time faculty with tenure, which suggest dissimilar institutional tenure policies. Finally, white males still dominate the tenure system with this condition changing slowly as more women and minority candidates enter the college teaching system and older faculty retire. (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NEA HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

Update

VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 3 • SEPTEMBER 1995

Tenure

ED 388 189

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE 028 732

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

NEA

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

NEA HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 3 • SEPTEMBER 1995

Update

Tenure

Tenure protects freedom of speech in academic settings. Without tenure, teachers who give voice to unpopular or unsettling ideas could be dismissed, and this loss of freedom would reduce the critical function of higher education in American culture. Colleges and universities face increasing external pressures from state and federal legislators to improve faculty productivity. Critics of the tenure system argue that tenure protects unproductive faculty members and reduces the flexibility of institutions to respond to financial downturns as well as the changing demands of students. In an era of corporate downsizing and institutional re-engineering, tenure seems anachronistic to outside observers. These tensions threaten the traditions of academic freedom and tenure.

The purpose of this report is to provide a national overview of patterns of tenure. For the most part, the current debate has taken place without benefit of an analysis of national data showing who has tenure and how it relates to the operation of postsecondary institutions.

Data for this report comes from the *1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty* (NSOPF:93) by the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. NSOPF:93 includes information on nearly 900,000 faculty members, of whom 595,340 were full-time. Everyone was included who had a faculty appointment, even if they did not meet any classes. The data did not include graduate students who served as teaching assistants.

Faculty Members with Tenure

Just over one-third (36 percent) of college and university faculty members have tenure, if full and part-time teachers are included (Table 1). Another 14 percent are on the tenure track. Half the faculty members are not eligible to attain tenure status, either because they are part-time, or they teach in an institution that does not provide tenure.

Full-time faculty members are more likely to have tenure than those who teach part-time. Fifty-three percent of the full-time faculty members have tenure compared to 3 percent of those who teach part-time. Ninety-five percent of part-time faculty members are not eligible for tenure compared to 26 percent of those who teach full-time.

Twenty-one percent of the full-time faculty members are on a tenure track. Nearly three quarters (74 percent) of the full-time

Table 1

PERCENT OF FULL AND PART-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS WITH TENURE

	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure at School	All Faculty
Part-time	2.8	1.6	45.8	44.1	5.6	33.8
Full-time	52.8	20.6	12.6	5.9	8.1	66.2
Average	**35.9**	**14.2**	**23.9**	**18.8**	**7.3**	**100%**

faculty members either have tenure or are eligible to receive tenure in the future. The remaining one-quarter of full-time faculty members will never receive tenure either because it is not available to individuals in their situation or the institution does not grant tenure.

Recently hired full-time faculty members, defined as those on the job for five or fewer years, are less likely to have tenure or be on the tenure track than is the case for all full-time faculty members. Only 64 percent of new faculty members have either tenure (23 percent) or are on tenure track (41 percent). That is 10 percent less than the 74 percent of all full-time faculty members who have tenure or are on the track. This is an important observation because an increasing number of women and minorities have been hired during this period. Reduction in the share of new faculty members on the tenure track was evident for all types of postsecondary institutions.

Table 2

TENURE STATUS OF ALL FACULTY MEMBERS BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE (percent)

Institutional Type	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School	% by Type of Institution
Pub. Research	54.0	16.9	19.2	9.6	0.3	18.0
Pub. Dr.	40.5	19.5	27.8	13.8	0.4	8.7
Pub. Comp.	47.4	18.0	21.0	12.9	0.7	12.7
Pub. 2-year	24.3	7.3	26.5	28.6	13.4	29.3
Priv. Research	34.0	16.9	27.6	18.8	2.8	7.3
Priv. Dr.	29.6	19.4	25.2	17.8	8.0	4.0
Priv. Comp.	28.8	15.0	27.3	21.1	7.8	7.3
Priv. Lib. Arts	35.3	17.2	24.6	16.5	6.4	6.5
Other	23.5	12.0	17.8	19.7	27.1	6.1
Average	**35.9**	**14.2**	**23.9**	**18.8**	**7.3**	**100%**

Table 3

TENURE STATUS OF FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY INSTITUTION TYPE (percent)

Institutional Type	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School	% by Type of Institution
Pub. Research	60.3	18.9	14.2	6.4	0.2	23.8
Pub. Dr.	51.1	24.8	17.6	6.1	0.5	10.2
Pub. Comp.	61.3	23.2	11.3	3.8	0.5	14.6
Pub. 2-year	52.3	14.8	6.8	4.7	21.4	19.8
Priv. Research	45.4	22.4	20.3	9.4	2.5	8.2
Priv. Dr.	41.3	26.6	14.5	9.3	8.3	4.3
Priv. Comp.	49.9	26.1	11.2	4.1	8.8	6.2
Priv. Lib. Arts	48.1	23.6	14.3	6.3	7.5	6.7
Other	34.1	16.9	8.5	6.8	33.8	6.2
Average	**52.8**	**20.6**	**12.6**	**5.9**	**8.1**	**100%**

Differences in Granting of Tenure by Type of Institution

Significant differences in the proportion of faculty members with tenure exist among the major types of institutions (Table 2). Public colleges and universities grant tenure to a larger proportion of their faculty members than private colleges and universities with similar missions. For example, 54 percent of the faculty members in public research universities have tenure compared to 34 percent in private research universities. The exception to this public/private difference is community colleges. They have a smaller share of their faculty members with tenure than any major institutional sector. This is in part due to the greater reliance on part-time faculty members by community colleges. Private colleges also rely more on part-time faculty members than public colleges, which explains some of the difference between the two categories. Institutions labeled *Other* may be public or private and include nursing schools and other specialized types of institutions. It is difficult to generalize about this mixed group.

When the comparisons are limited to full-time faculty members, all sectors show an increased share of their faculty members with tenure (Table 3). The increase is greatest for community colleges. This is due to the high proportion of untenured part-time faculty

Table 4

TENURE BY MAJOR ACADEMIC AREA

	All Faculty	Full-time Faculty
Agriculture/home economics	62.5%	71.0%
Engineering	46.1	59.0
Social Science	44.4	61.6
Natural Science	43.8	61.7
Humanities	37.8	59.5
Education	33.9	53.6
Fine Arts	32.7	54.5
Business	32.4	51.9
Other	28.8	48.6
Health Science	27.4	37.2

members who teach in community colleges. Public colleges continue to have a greater share of faculty members with tenure when compared to private institutions with a similar mission. This suggests that private colleges have different tenure policies than public colleges.

Compared to other types of institutions, community colleges and Other institutions are the least likely to have a tenure system in place. Over one-fifth of those teaching in community colleges reported that tenure was not available as did one third of those teaching in Other institutions. Faculty members in private four-year colleges and universities were more likely to report that tenure did not exist at the institution than did those teaching in public institutions.

Tenure by Academic Area

The share of faculty members with tenure differs by academic program area (Table 4). Agriculture/home economics leads the list, both for all faculty and full-time only faculty, while health science falls at the bottom of both lists. The low share of faculty members with tenure in health science programs is explained by the fact that only 18 percent of the faculty members who provide "clinical oversight" have tenure compared to 37 percent who teach in the classroom. Clinical oversight is more likely to be an assignment type in health sciences than in other areas of teaching.

Table 5

TENURE STATUS OF FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY GENDER (percent)

Gender	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School	% Faculty by Gender
Male	59.8	18.4	10.4	4.6	6.8	67.1
Female	28.4	25.0	17.3	8.5	10.83	32.9
Average	**52.8**	**20.6**	**12.6**	**5.9**	**8.1**	**100%**

Table 6

TENURE STATUS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY (percent)

Race/ethnicity	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School	% Faculty by Ethnicity
White	54.3	19.4	12.0	5.8	8.6	86.4
Asian	44.0	26.3	17.1	7.5	7.7	3.0
Black	42.8	27.3	19.2	5.7	5.0	5.0
Hispanic	43.7	32.5	12.6	5.1	6.1	2.6
American Indian	42.3	25.5	12.4	7.8	12.1	0.5
Average	52.8	20.6	12.6	5.9	8.1	100%

Table 7

TENURE STATUS OF FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY ACADEMIC RANK (percent)

Rank	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School	% Faculty by Academic Rank
Professor	90.0	2.5	2.1	1.3	4.1	19.8
Associate	75.7	12.5	4.5	3.1	4.3	22.9
Assistant	14.6	59.6	16.3	4.1	5.4	23.1
Lecturer	6.2	4.0	61.7	26.5	1.7	2.2
Instructor	23.2	19.4	25.5	12.9	19.0	13.5
Not Available	37.9	7.9	7.8	7.9	38.6	3.3
Other	14.6	5.0	41.0	24.5	14.5	5.3
Average	52.8	20.6	12.6	5.9	8.1	100%

The increase in the percent tenured between all and full-time faculty is greatest in the humanities and fine arts. This suggests that more part-time faculty members without tenure teach in these programs compared to others.

Characteristics of Full-time Faculty Members

Women are much less likely to have tenure than men. Among all facutly, forty-three percent of the men have tenure compared to 23 percent of the women. This difference reflects several circumstances that distinguish men and women who teach in colleges. Women are more likely to teach part-time than men; they are more likely to teach in community colleges and to have been on the job for fewer years, on average, than men. These factors contribute to the variation in tenure rates between men and women. When the comparison is limited to full-time faculty members, men are still more likely to have tenure compared to women, 60 percent to 28 percent (Table 5). Stated in another way, women represent one-third of the full-time faculty members but less than one-quarter (24 percent) of those with tenure.

Tenure rates differ by race and ethnicity (Table 6). White full-time faculty members are more likely to have tenure than minority faculty members. There is some evidence that colleges and universities are improving in the hiring of minority faculty members. Minority faculty members are more likely to be candidates for tenure than full-time white faculty members.

This slight advantage in tenure track appointments could take years to make any significant difference in the proportion of minority faculty members with tenure. There are 122,516 tenure candidates. Eighteen percent, or 22,486 of the individuals on track for tenure are minority and the remaining 82 percent, or 100,030 are white.

Table 8

SALARIES OF FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY TENURE STATUS

Tenure Status	Full-time Faculty
Tenure	$53,756
On Tenure Track	42,447
Not on Tenure Track	39,820
No Tenure for Employ. Status	40,264
No Tenure Offered at School	40,397

As expected, tenured faculty members are older than those without tenure. Those with tenure are 52 years old, on average, and those on track for tenure are ten years younger. Those with no option for tenure are in their mid-forties.

Tenure is closely associated with academic rank (Table 7). The relationship is not perfect, in part because many community colleges and specialized types of institutions do not assign faculty members to academic ranks.

Faculty members teaching in the last three categories were more likely to report that tenure was not available in their institution than those with the more traditional academic ranks (*Not Available* 39 percent, *Instructor* 19 percent, and *Other* 14.5 percent). This is because faculty members with these titles, or lack of titles, are more likely to teach in community colleges or specialized types of institutions that do not follow trad-

Table 9

SALARIES OF FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY TENURE STATUS AND INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY

	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure for Employ. Status	No Tenure Offered at School
Pub. Research	$63,258	$46,429	$42,328	$43,246	$49,671
Priv. Research	$71,153	$59,091	$45,434	$44,731	$61,544
Pub. Dr.	$56,427	$48,158	$48,138	$37,800	$37,737
Priv. Dr.	$64,736	$59,596	$46,368	$62,573	$65,021
Pub. Comp.	$48,005	$36,643	$30,996	$30,461	$28,591
Priv. Comp.	$44,506	$35,126	$33,676	$37,840	$35,538
Priv. Lib. Arts	$43,633	$32,479	$33,354	$33,880	$31,204
Pub. 2-year	$43,737	$32,252	$33,029	$34,606	$40,726
Other	$44,992	$37,694	$34,801	$36,827	$37,270

Table 10

INDICATORS OF WORKLOAD FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS (average)

Type of School	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure Offered at School
Public Research				
Articles	5.2	4.4	2.8	3.7
Books, Chapters	2.7	1.9	1.5	1.8
Committee	7.9	4.4	1.3	0.5
Number of Classes	2.0	1.9	1.4	0.9
Scheduled Office Hours	7.3	6.7	10.6	9.7
Private Research				
Articles	6.9	4.2	2.4	3.5
Books, Chapters	3.1	2.1	1.0	1.6
Committee	5.6	3.1	0.5	0.6
Number of Classes	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.1
Scheduled Office Hours	6.0	7.2	6.2	6.4
Public Doctoral				
Articles	3.7	2.9	2.2	2.1
Books, Chapters	2.2	1.6	1.0	1.6
Committee	5.4	3.6	0.6	0.2
Number of Classes	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.5
Scheduled Office Hours	8.1	8.1	11.8	13.9
Private Doctoral				
Articles	3.1	3.5	1.0	2.3
Books, Chapters	2.0	1.6	1.0	1.2
Committee	4.0	2.3	0.5	1.4
Number of Classes	2.3	2.2	2.6	1.8
Scheduled Office Hours	8.7	7.5	14.9	11.7

Type of School	Tenure	On Tenure Track	Not On Tenure Track	No Tenure Offered at School
Public Comprehensive				
Articles	1.6	2.0	0.8	0.6
Books, Chapters	1.3	0.3	1.0	0.5
Committee	1.4	2.4	0.7	0.3
Number of Classes	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9
Scheduled Office Hours	8.7	7.8	9.4	10.8
Private Comprehensive				
Articles	1.2	1.6	0.6	0.7
Books, Chapters	1.2	1.3	0.4	1.5
Committee	2.1	1.2	0.6	1.4
Number of Classes	3.2	3.3	2.5	3.0
Scheduled Office Hours	8.1	7.8	12.8	12.2
Private Liberal Arts				
Articles	1.3	1.3	0.5	0.4
Books, Chapters	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.5
Committee	2.1	1.6	0.6	1.0
Number of Classes	3.0	3.2	2.8	3.0
Scheduled Office Hours	7.2	6.9	12.4	12.2
Public 2 Year				
Articles	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2
Books, Chapters	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.4
Committee	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Number of Classes	3.8	3.6	2.8	3.6
Scheduled Office Hours	8.4	8.8	10.4	10.1

NEA HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

tional tenure patterns as consistently as more traditional colleges.

Salary of Tenured Faculty Members

Because tenure is dependant upon the length of time in the job and upon regular promotion through junior faculty assignments, full-time tenured faculty members generally earn more than those with no tenure (Table 8). There is little difference in salaries among faculty members in jobs with no possibility of tenure.

The only instance where faculty members without tenure earned more than those with tenure was in private doctoral universities where faculty members at institutions that offer no tenure earned slightly more than those offering tenure (Table 9). The difference is not statistically significant.

Workload

The suspicion, voiced by critics of the tenure system, that faculty members do not work as hard once they attain tenure, is not supported by the data. Tenured faculty members publish more, teach more

classes, and serve on more committees (Table 10). The consistent difference in office hours suggests that those not on tenure may have broader assignments than pure teaching. The indicators of faculty workload are reported by institutional type and control to allow for differences in institutional mission in the comparisons. Faculty members in each type of institution use their time differently. The list of articles and books, or book chapters reflects the number completed over the last two years. Committee service is reported for student projects such as dissertations, but not for institutional or departmental committee work. The average number of courses taught reflects the number of credit courses taught in the average week, during the current semester. Faculty members who teach on the quarter and semester systems are not separated in this analysis. Faculty members may teach other classes that are not considered degree credit classes. The office hours represent formal, scheduled, weekly office hours.

Summary and Conclusions

Analysis of this data helps to dispel two myths about tenure. The first is that college administrators have their financial management options reduced because of the high proportion of tenured faculty. In fact, only slightly more than one-third of all college and university faculty members have tenure (35.9 percent), and just over half of the full-time faculty members have tenure (52.8 percent). The second myth is that tenured professors are not as productive as those without tenure. By most accepted measures, faculty members with tenure publish more and have more contact with students than those without tenure.

At the same time, the data raise some new questions that cannot be answered with the current figures. Differences exist between public and private colleges in the share of the full-time faculty with tenure, which suggests dissimilar institutional tenure policies. Existing data do not shed light on what these differences might be. Faculty members with no tenure may have different teaching assignments (i.e., more remedial courses) than those without tenure. Again, the data do not allow analysis of these possible differences.

White males still dominate in the tenure system. This condition is changing slowly as more women and minority candidates enter the college teaching system and the older white men begin to retire in greater numbers. Even though progress is being made, it will take a long time before equity is realized. Currently, it seems that colleges and universities may be limiting the number of new faculty members with tenure as a way to protect themselves against anticipated financial reductions.

nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Office of Higher Education
1201 Sixteenth Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-822-7100

Copyright © 1995
National Education Association

Higher Education Staff
Christine Maitland
Rachel Hendrickson
Dely Pena
Barbara Valentine

This issue written by
John Lee
JBL Associates

President,
Educational Resources Info Center Clearinghouse on HE
Suite 630
One Dupont Circle, N. W.
Washington, DC 20036 (HE)